

Mr. SPECTER. I thank the Chair.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. SALAZAR. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a piece of a landmark civil rights legislation on the occasion of its 40th Anniversary: the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Before the passage of the Voting Rights Act, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and others were routinely prevented from voting. The various tactics used to impede and discourage people from registering to vote or turning out on election day ranged from literacy tests, poll taxes, and language barriers, to overt voter intimidation and harassment.

On August 6, 1965, when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, America took a critical step forward in its quest for inclusiveness. Just a year earlier, President Johnson had signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, proclaiming that in America,

We believe that all men are created equal, yet many are denied equal treatment. We believe that all men have certain unalienable rights, yet many Americans do not enjoy those rights. We believe that all men are entitled to the blessings of liberty, yet millions are being deprived of those blessings, not because of their own failures, but because of color of the skin.

President Johnson knew then what we still recognize today. The enactment of both of these critical pieces of legislation was only one step in our country's journey to become an inclusive America where all its citizens enjoy the rights and protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

When he recalled this day, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wisely pointed out that "the bill that lay on the polished mahogany desk was born in violence in Selma, AL, where a stubborn sheriff had stumbled against the future." Dr. King was, of course, referring to "Bloody Sunday," the March 7, 1965, incident where more than 500 non-violent civil rights marchers attempting a 54-mile march to the state capital to call for voting rights were confronted by an aggressive assault by authorities.

In our country's history, we have stumbled, but great leaders such as Dr. King, and countless others who toiled and gave their lives, made certain that we got back up and continued on our path toward progress.

On the dawn of its 40th anniversary, Congress is preparing for the reauthorization of key provisions in the Voting Rights Act that will expire in 2007. I hope that the Senate can rise above the partisanship that often plagues this body to renew the promise of inclusiveness that the Voting Rights Act has sought to achieve since its inception. In the past, we have been able to accomplish this and the results have been truly extraordinary.

Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act, the doors to opportunity

for political participation by previously disenfranchised groups have swung open. Their voices have been heard and counted. The result has been an America where the number of black elected officials nationwide has risen from 300 in 1964 to more than 9,000 today. In addition, there are over 5,000 Latinos who now hold public office, and there are still hundreds more Asian Americans and Native Americans serving as elected officials.

However, in order to continue to make progress, Congress will need to reauthorize and maintain its enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. Today, as we work to promote democracy in Iraq and other regions of the world, I wish to honor the legacy of this milestone in our own Nation's democracy and to thank all those who have been a part of the civil rights movements.

I thank the President and yield the floor.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT RESOLUTION

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I rise today on the 15th anniversary of the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act to commemorate its passage, commend its many authors, and suggest some actions we should take to protect, preserve, and advance its legacy as a vital component of our laws on civil rights.

Fifteen years ago, President George Herbert Walker Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act, a landmark piece of legislation that extended civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities.

Prior to the passage of the ADA, far too many of our fellow Americans with disabilities faced utterly unnecessary obstacles. Many lacked accessible transportation, reasonable workplace accommodations, and entree to government buildings.

Passionate reformers of all stripes sought to change this, and we cannot discuss the ADA without first mentioning the name Justin Dart, Jr. Never without his trademark cowboy hat, Justin Dart worked tirelessly for enactment of the act. His efforts came to national attention in 1981, when President Reagan appointed him to be the vice-chair of what is now known as the National Council on Disability. Mr. Dart and others on the council drafted a policy that called for civil rights legislation to end discrimination against people with disabilities, a policy that eventually would form the basis for the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Widely respected and beloved by both sides, Justin Dart passed away in 2002.

Another champion for Americans with disabilities was, without question, our former colleague, Bob Dole. It was 1942 when, at the age of 19, Bob Dole joined the Army to fight in World War II. A year later, in the hills of Italy fighting the Nazis, Senator Dole was hit by gunfire. The shot shattered his

right shoulder, fractured vertebrae in his neck and spine, paralyzed him from the neck down, and damaged a kidney.

Of course, he recovered to become one of the most influential legislators of the 20th century. Urging Congress to pass the ADA, he said, "This historic civil rights legislation seeks to end the unjustified segregation and exclusion of persons with disabilities from the mainstream of American life."

A study of the legislative history of the act reveals that it was, in every sense, a bipartisan accomplishment. The legislation supports a notion in which President Reagan deeply believed. He used to say that there is no limit to what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit.

The act was then signed into law by another great American, President George H. W. Bush. In signing the legislation, President Bush spoke of what he felt the law would offer Americans with disabilities. He said "This Act . . . will ensure that people with disabilities are given the basic guarantees for which they have worked so long and so hard: independence, freedom of choice, control of their lives, the opportunity to blend fully and equally into the rich mosaic of the American mainstream."

Since the passage of the ADA, we have seen significant improvements in the employment and economic well-being of citizens with disabilities. In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that over the previous 15 years, the employment rate for working age men with a disability had increased by more than 25 percent. Other evidence of the ADA's impact was even more readily apparent. For instance, the barriers to mobility once posed by public transportation have been largely eliminated. Here in Washington, DC, for example, 95 percent of the Metro system is accessible to persons with disabilities.

However, anniversaries are not just for looking back and celebrating the achievements of the past. They must also be an occasion for looking forward to the challenges that still lie before us.

A report issued by the Institute for Higher Education Policy in 2004 revealed that less than two-thirds of youths with disabilities receive standard high school diplomas. Although this graduation rate represents a significantly higher rate than 15 years ago, it remains inadequate, and significantly behind the rate for individuals without disabilities.

We in Congress must maintain high expectations for all Americans. Americans with disabilities can compete and cooperate at the same level as Americans without disabilities. I was happy to work on the No Child Left Behind Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, both of which incorporated the principle of high expectations for all, regardless of race, gender, or disability.

We also must incorporate the latest technology to help further incorporate

Americans with disabilities into our workplaces. I was pleased to support President George W. Bush's New Freedom Initiative, which builds on the progress of the ADA by supporting new technologies that make communications easier, and thereby helping people with disabilities live full, active lives in their communities.

We in Georgia know that people with disabilities can realize their incredible potential and better our workplaces, our schools, and our society. For 6 years, we were represented in this body by Senator Max Cleland, a disabled Vietnam veteran.

No one knew the potential of Americans with disabilities better than Bobby Dodd, whom most Georgians would associate with Georgia Tech and his phenomenal years coaching, winning football teams. But after his retirement, he developed the Bobby Dodd Institute, which works to ensure that Atlantans with disabilities are given the opportunities to achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment.

Another name that comes to mind when we discuss heroes to Americans with disabilities is Tommy Nobis. Tommy was the first draft pick in the history of the Atlanta Falcons, taken No. 1 in the 1965 draft. A steady and reliable linebacker, Tommy was a five-time Pro-Bowler and NFL Rookie of the Year in 1966. Yet far more important than his football accomplishments are his accomplishments off the field. In 1975, he founded the Tommy Nobis Center to provide vocational training to persons with disabilities. Originally run out of a small, crowded trailer, the center now operates a \$2 million state-of-the-art center in Marietta, GA. The center enables individuals to enter or return to employment and to enjoy productive and independent lifestyles while contributing to the greater business community. Over their proud 25-year history, the center has assisted over 11,000 individuals with disabilities.

Again, I am pleased to cosponsor today's resolution and offer my sincerest congratulations to all of those who have worked to ensure better lives for Americans with disabilities.

HONORING ALAN CHARLES SADOSKI

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of Alan Charles Sadoski, a loving husband, father, and friend whose lasting memory is continually celebrated by everyone who knew and loved him.

Alan's life was filled with family, friends, excitement, and laughter. He was one of what quickly became seven brothers and sisters growing up in Salem, MA. Everyone who knew him will tell you that his siblings were not only his best friends but also his biggest fans. He graduated from high school in 1967 and went on to become a standout soccer player at Salem State College, while at the same time serving in the Massachusetts National Guard.

After odd jobs throughout the summers in and around Salem, Alan took a job working as a teller for the Essex Bank. Little did he know at the time, but that job changed Alan's life. Not only did Alan find a career, but he also fell in love with a fellow teller, Claire McGuire. The two married and began their life together, ultimately moving to Washington, DC where Claire pursued her legal career and Alan took a job with the National Bank of Washington. Everyone who knew Alan can remember him on his way to work, the banker in his three piece suit.

On December 29, 1981 Claire and Alan had a son named Nicholas Alan. Shortly thereafter the family moved into their first home where Alan's love of fatherhood blossomed. Alan converted the boxes from their new appliances into little homes for Nick and the two of them spent countless hours playing together. When Nick had trouble sleeping at night, Alan would drive him around the neighborhood until he fell asleep. He even brought Nick back to Salem for his first haircut at the barbershop just down the street from his own childhood home. Everyone could see how much Alan enjoyed being a father.

Although Alan fought hard, his spirit and courage in the face of adversity never showing the effects of his illness, he sadly succumbed to his battle with cancer on August 12, 1985. He was troubled by the idea of leaving his wife and son behind, but he knew they would be taken care of and supported by both his family and the legion of friends he made over the years. Each of them made a special promise to Alan that in their own way they would always make sure Claire and Nick were okay. It is now 20 years later and Alan's friends and family have never let the two of them down.

Over the years the people closest to Alan have kept his spirit alive by thinking about him often and sharing their memories of him with others. His friends remember his tolerant and understanding nature. They remember his love of camping and how much he had hoped to take his son and nephews out on a true wilderness adventure. They talk about his fabled flapjacks, and how everyone would watch the pancake impresario perform his tricks. They remember how much fun it was to be around Alan; how he was always at the center of the crowd, telling some of his famous stories, somehow making the gathering better just by being there. Even the pharmacists at the local drugstore, who saw Alan during some of the worst days of his illness, thought the world of him and even made a donation to the American Cancer Society in his honor. He truly touched everyone he met.

Since then the family has remained close and they talk about Alan often. He has nieces and nephews now that he never had a chance to meet, but they have heard all about "Uncle Al, the Kiddies' Pal." Alan would be happy to

know that the people who meant the most to him in his life still gather and share their memories of him after his death. He would love to know that Claire and Nick are the best of friends. He would love to know that Nick enjoys hearing stories about his dad, and perhaps more than anything else, loves to hear people say, "Your dad would be proud of you."

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, the Department of Transportation's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program is vital to ensuring that businesses owned by women and minorities have an equal opportunity to compete for Federal highway construction contracts, and I commend the conferees for supporting this important program in this year's highway bill.

Since the program was created in 1982 and expanded to include women in 1987, the construction industry has changed significantly. Although we still have far to go to fully address the effects of discrimination in the industry, the program has opened many doors of opportunity for women and minorities in what was once a virtually all-male, all-white construction industry. The program deserves high marks in combating the effects of discrimination in highway construction. But on the extensive information available to us in considering its reauthorization, it is also clear that the program is still very much needed to achieve a level playing field for all qualified contractors, regardless of race or gender.

Since Congress first began examining this problem, it has been clear that the construction industry generally, and highway construction in particular, have been predominantly an insiders' business that often exclude women and minorities for discriminatory reasons. The persistence of this festering problem has denied opportunities for African American-, Asian American-, Latino-, Native American-, and women-owned firms in the industry.

Our extensive hearings and other information gathered over the years made clear that women and minorities historically have been excluded from both public and private construction contracting. When Congress last reviewed the program in 1998, there was strong evidence of discriminatory lending practices that deny women and minorities the capital necessary to compete on an equal footing. Much of that information is cited and described in three leading rulings by Federal courts of appeals—the Eighth Circuit's opinion in *Sherbrooke Turf, Inc. v. Minnesota Department of Transportation*, the Tenth Circuit's opinion in *Adarand Constructors v. Peña*, and the Ninth Circuit's opinion in *Western States Paving Company v. Washington State Department of Transportation*, all of which upheld the program as constitutional, and found that it is narrowly